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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8125
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RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 7862
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 0213
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 4998
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 8368
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 1673
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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8903
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SIPDIS

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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Front-page stories this morning included the indictment of a secretary to a senior opposition LDP lawmaker on charges related to illicit political donations from a general contractor.

¶2. "Do Not Turn Futenma Issue into Bilateral Crisis" The liberal Asahi editorialized (12/10): "The problem lies in the absence of honest communications [between the U.S. and Japan] from the standpoint of how to maintain deterrence by the U.S. military in Japan and how Japan will share the necessary costs. The argument that the bilateral alliance will fall apart over this issue is shortsighted. However, it is regrettable that the current stalemate is being confounded due to the lack of communication."

¶3. "Efforts to Build Confidence Should Be Continued" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun argued (12/10): "The suspension of the working group on Futenma, as well as the postponement of a bilateral discussion process on a broader alliance, will not result in an immediate deterioration of U.S.-Japan relations.... According to press reports, Ambassador Roos blew up at Foreign Minister Okada and Defense Minister Kitazawa over the Hatoyama administration's refusal to implement the existing U.S.-Japan accord [on Futenma]. Mr. Okada has denied that the Ambassador was furious. However, if he had taken a high-handed attitude reminiscent of the era of U.S. occupation of Japan, it would have just inflamed anti-American sentiment among Japanese. The U.S. should refrain from taking such a stance."

¶4. "PM's 'Betrayal of Trust' to Blame for Futenma Delay" The conservative Sankei insisted (12/10): "PM Hatoyama, while saying that the [U.S.-Japan] 'alliance is a pillar' [of Japanese diplomacy], bears an extremely grave responsibility because he has undermined the relationship of trust with the U.S. and put the bilateral alliance at risk only three months after his inauguration. He should immediately settle the matter in line with the existing accord and repair the bilateral alliance.... The international

community's confidence in Japan will be lost if the administration takes a stance of prioritizing the maintenance of the coalition government over national security."

15. "Decision Needed to Avert Crisis in Alliance" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (12/10): "Prime Minister Hatoyama's judgment to place foremost priority on maintaining the coalition government is causing a crisis in the U.S.-Japan alliance. If the situation remains unresolved, the entire U.S.-Japan relationship will be gravely affected, not just in the security arena but also in the political and economic fields.... A unilateral decision [by Japan] to give up on reaching a conclusion by the end of the year for domestic reasons, despite confirming in the November summit the intention to reach an expeditious decision, would make collaborative efforts impossible in U.S.-Japan relations, which are built upon mutual trust. The GOJ must seriously consider the profound consequences that would occur as a result of a decision to put off a decision until next year."

ROOS